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LETTER DATED 13 MAY 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum showing the negative and deleterious effects on the services and programmes of the health sector resulting from the aerial embargo imposed on the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by Security Council resolution 748 (1992).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the annexed memorandum circulated as documents of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ali Ahmed ELHOUDERI
Permanent Representative

Annex

Memorandum showing the negative and deleterious effects of the aerial embargo on the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Many negative effects have resulted from the aerial embargo imposed on the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by Security Council resolution 748 (1992). The health service sector has been the one most seriously affected, as is indicated below:

I. Medical supplies

(a) There are numerous medical supplies that need to be transported speedily from processing and preparation sites to storage sites. The lack of means of rapid transportation with good storage conditions also leads to disruption of treatment, prevention, inoculation and diagnosis programmes, such as the child inoculation programmes. Another result is the reduction of the effectiveness of these substances or the total cessation of effectiveness, particularly with regard to drugs whose life is confined to a number of days only, such as radioactive iodine used in glandular treatment and some chemical reagents.

(b) Many if not most means of maritime transport and international maritime agencies do not have the expertise or capacities for preserving certain types of drugs, vaccines and sera that all international health organizations, first and foremost the World Health Organization, recommend be kept in the cold chain because non-compliance will lead to certain spoilage. Libyan Arab sea ports and world ports also are not prepared for storage in accordance with these specifications. The main examples of such types of drugs are as follows:

Certain cancer antidotes

Certain vital antidotes

Hormones such as insulin

Anticoagulants

Haemophilia antidotes

Certain uterine contraction agents

Blood group series and their derivatives

Anaesthetics

Amino acids used in intravenous feeding

Some eye surgery drugs

Vaccines of all kinds

Scorpion and snake sera and hydrophobia vaccines

Chemical reagents for rhesus work

Bacterial culture reagents and many other items

(c) Narcotic drugs and tranquilizers require an organized mode of importation guaranteeing that no quantity is pilfered. This security requirement cannot be met through maritime transport and transit through a number of ports on the way to arrival in the Jamahiriya, in addition to transit through the ports of the exporting State and the importing State.

(d) Necessity often calls for speedy emergency orders to meet deficiencies in the drug stock in one or more categories. Such circumstances require that the orders be available within a matter of days, and the aerial embargo does not ensure that or rather prevents it.

(e) On the basis of previous normal circumstances, a number of agreements were made for orders to be delivered by air, on credit terms binding on both parties, with deliveries to be made by air. Current circumstances do not permit this, and this requires basic adjustments in the letter of credit, which requires measures and considerable time and will result in an unquestionable delay in the arrival of these orders and, consequently, a deficiency in the stock, while some consignments are located in airport depots outside the Great Jamahiriya, ready for delivery.

(f) The halting of air flights has had a negative effect on information regarding tenders for shipments by sea and information on existing tenders, such as tender 1/93, in connection with which we are waiting for data and samples sent by foreign countries seeking to participate, and these have to be sent by air mail. This, in turn, will greatly disrupt the medical supply system in the future.

(g) Some patients are suffering from allergies that require a sample taken from the patient to be sent abroad by air for analysis. In these circumstances, it is absolutely impossible to carry out this process.

(h) Some individuals are afflicted with symptoms unknown or not customary in the Jamahiriya, and the importation of drugs for them requires speedy special orders for specific drugs. Delay in the arrival of such drugs or shipment by sea may result in the death of the patient or, at least, aggravation of his conditions.

II. Medical services and international health

The departure of many nurses, physicians and technicians has left great confusion in the field of medical services. The aerial embargo has prevented participation in scientific medical conferences, symposiums and meetings and the entry of scientific data, publications, research and periodicals. It has prevented visits agreed on in the medical field being made on schedule. Furthermore, the most salient aspects of the detrimental impact in these two fields are as follows:

(a) It is not possible to send many difficult cases abroad; arranging for the patients to travel to neighbouring countries by land and sea would lead to serious complications.

(b) Many professors and specialists are unable to come to the Jamahiriya to perform difficult surgical operations or treat acute cases.